



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

JEWISH OSTRACISM IN AMERICA.

AVERSION to the foreigner is an instinct of the human heart. The street-boy who stones the harmless Chinese, represents the normal dislike of the untutored mind for the man who differs. The feeling which is the basis of the closest human relations—the feeling of sympathy—is but the reverse of the antipathy experienced against the possessor of opposite views. To the savage, the creature whose conduct varies from his own, is of another species. Classic civilization found the stranger the barbarian. Mediæval crusaders attacked as barbaric the richest culture of the age. In more modern times, the volatile Frenchman bore no affection for the shop-keeper across the Channel, and the phlegmatic Saxon showed little disposition to love his Latin neighbor.

In the light of a closer knowledge, the causes which foster hatred of the foreigner are being rapidly removed. The extension of social communion teaches us that our range of experience is not the only possible one. Truth becomes relative, and no longer are we alone infallible. The multiplication and diffusion of literature acquaints nations with the inner life of each other; steam and electricity disclose a common resemblance beneath the superficial differences of peoples. The loud-voiced thunder of the locomotive, the silent tremblings of the mid-ocean cable, preach the brotherhood of man.

And so we seek in strange lands and in foreign tongues the traces of that common brotherhood. Gautama Buddha, no more an accursed pretender, is an inspired prophet. His deeds swell the poetry of a nation far removed from his own in psychological tendencies. Mohammed, once a crazy impostor, is a soul possessed with the divine frenzy of a seer. The hand of fellowship is extended to the quondam infidel.

Why is the Jew still excluded from the brotherhood of humanity? He is no distant creature, to be idealized. He is colonized

with such power in Aryan countries as to make the Pharaonic rulers dread the multiplication of Hebrew resources. A divergence in religion, in physique, in mental habits, may be tolerated, but it must know its place, and not compete successfully in the mart and in the college with the apostles of humanity. The dweller of the Rhine would probably lose some of his vaunted love for his brother of the Ganges did that brother show any disposition to encroach upon the soil of United Germany. Common brotherhood has not reached the point of forgetfulness of *meum* and *tuum*. "You are my brother," cries the tolerant philosopher of to-day, "but only so long as you keep your distance. Come nearer, show any disposition to take from me my philosophic laurels or my unphilosophic gains, and I denounce you as a scourge and a plague."

But, whatever may be the excuse in other countries, America has no extenuation for antipathy to the stranger. The American people is not a nation that traces a long line of ancestry to an aboriginal root. America is the scrap-bag of the world. The nations have contributed, and do still contribute, to form a motley population, from which a new people is to arise. In the first century of its existence, American institutions developed no original form peculiar to a distinct nation. American literature is only now assuming a native air; and schools of American philosophy, music, and art are aspirations of the future. The first settlers of the soil—whether Catholic, Protestant, or Puritan, Gaul, Celt, or Saxon—were, indeed, Aryan and Christian; but any common right based upon the bonds of Aryanism or Christianity would, until the present day, have been considered absurd. To the colonial Puritan, Roger Williams was the foreigner as truly, if not as fully, as the Hindu of the same or the Jew of a different stock.

The American Revolution was a union of foreigners. The American Constitution was the law of a state organized for the common protection of foreigners. Its vitality lay in its political recognition of the dissenter, or, rather, in its non-recognition of any dissent. Its citizen was the man, not the sectarian. Whether brought about by the course of progress, or by the exigency of the times, the American Constitution was the only resource of a nation of foreigners. American hatred of the foreigner is a paradox.

In America, the Jew has a double claim to recognition—the claim of the man, under the wide tolerance of to-day, and the

claim of the American citizen, under the broad spirit of the American Constitution. Has he received the treatment he merits as a man, and the rights he deserves as a citizen ?

To rehearse his virtues in the latter character is to tell a trite and oft-told tale. The judge who desires to be considered liberal recites them from the bench when, on rare occasions, he has the opportunity. The Hebrew, his honor declares, is among the best of citizens. Peaceful by nature, he bears much without complaint. He is rarely met in almshouses and prisons; he seldom trespasses on public charities; he is temperate and moral; the societies for prevention of cruelty have no field among his people. He supports his own poor, contributes to general almsgiving, and opens his hospitals to the sick of all creeds and races. He fights the battles of America, gives his means in her cause, and loves, with passionate enthusiasm, the land of his adoption. This citizen certainly deserves equality of rights under a free government such as that of the States professes to be.

The first amendment to the Federal Constitution, emphasizing the spirit of the whole document, declares that Congress shall establish no religion. This provision would appear to guarantee the separation of church and state under American jurisdiction. But literal interpreters find that the first amendment, which forbids a national religion, implies the right of each State to establish a church according to the special bias of the commonwealth. This explanation has been practically recognized as the true one. While the Jew may possess, theoretically, the equality of an American citizen, actually, any State may enact such proscriptive laws as it deems desirable.

The constitutions of many of the older States are permeated with religious preferences. Those declarations which tacitly excluded the Jew from the protection of the commonwealth were always of little practical moment. More injurious were the regulations that made Christianity a test for office. Prolonged hesitancy was shown by the ostracizing States to relinquish conscientious scruples against a Hebrew legislator. Not until the year after the centennial anniversary of our independence was the last religious qualification for office abolished, when New Hampshire annulled the law which required its executive and the members of its Assembly to be of the Protestant faith.

The gradual acceptance of the doctrine that the state is a social expedient, not a divine organism, is tending to harmonize

the spirit of the American Union with the spirit of the American commonwealth. That the legitimate province of politics has not yet been clearly defined, is abundantly shown by the Sunday laws. While no uniformity in these regulations exists among the States, yet in all the first day of the week is recognized as the official Sabbath, and its observance is enforced by penal statutes. In the more liberal of the commonwealths, Sabbatarians are, with various restrictions, freed from the penalties imposed on the ordinary Sabbath-breaker; they are likewise granted exemption from court attendance on the seventh day. These concessions, however, have by no means become general. A long contest of five years has been waging in the legislature of Pennsylvania to shield Sabbatarians, who work quietly in their premises on Sunday, from legal prosecution.* The conscientious observer of the Sinaic Sabbath is forced in many States to lose two days of the week, while the follower of the popular belief loses but one; he is compelled to attend court on the seventh day, and is penally restricted from amusement on a day not sacred to him. The musty odor of colonial charters and Puritanical laws still clings to the halls of American legislation.

Besides this wrong, there is another that comes to the family board of the Jew with special force. It is the disability imposed upon his children in the free schools of America. The Jewish parent pays his taxes equally with the Christian citizen; the Jewish pupil does not flag in the race for knowledge with his Christian rival; yet at the public school the disadvantages of the disciples of Moses are so great as to cause many a little heart, burning with ambition, to dread the approach of the Mosaic festivals. With the recurrence of each season, examinations are arbitrarily fixed on the very holiday of the Jew; absence for religious purposes is punished as an offense.† “I am sorry for you,” said a

*At the last session of the Pennsylvania legislature, only one vote was required to secure the passage of the Exemption Bill in the Senate.

†The manner of reckoning Jewish holidays upon the school calendar, and the time for fixing examinations, are usually decided by a local board of school-directors, or by the instructors. Where liberality and justice govern these decisions, the Jewish pupil loses nothing, except the day's tuition. But often—at least, in the East—the scholar absent for religious purposes on ordinary school days is punished as if he had played truant. Where lessons are heard or excused, an absent-mark gives his Christian competitor the advantage; but on Christian holidays and semi-holidays the school door is shut in the face of the Jew.

teacher to her best pupil, placed at the end of the class; "it is your misfortune, not your fault, that you are a Jew."

This remark is an evidence of the spirit with which secular knowledge is inculcated in the free schools of America. Under the instruction of the unsectarian school-mistress, the invention of the press is the result of Christian civilization; the geography of India is the triumph of Christian progress; the science of morals is inseparable from Christian dogma. Hymns to the Trinity, readings from the Testament, resound in the halls of secular learning, and the Jew, perhaps excused by special permission from denying the teachings of his home, is marked with the sign of an invidious separation.

Is it strange that, barring other influences than those arising from civil distinctions, the Jews should be socially ostracized in America? So long as American laws extend a patronizing tolerance to the Hebrew, and public schools guide the finger of the street-boy to point at Jewish features with an infant "Hep, hep," can American society fail to inhale the subtle Judaeophobia of the common atmosphere?

The civil disabilities of the Hebrew are, however, but the retro-active agents of a social prejudice, whose direct causes we are about to examine. In the popular mind the Jew is never judged as an individual, but as a specimen of a whole race whose members are identically of the same kind. It is, therefore, necessary to take but one of the species, and, describing him, *ex uno, disce omnes*. The Jew generically (so runs the ordinary estimate) is an objectionable character, whose shrewdness and questionable dealings in trade enable him to wear large diamonds and flashy clothes. He raises his voice beyond the fashionable key, in a language execrable to the ears of English-speaking people. For the proprieties and amenities of cultured life he has no regard. His conversation rings upon the key-note of the dollar; his literature is the quotations of the market. Mean in pence, he spends his pounds with an ostentation that shocks refined people. Of the higher sympathies he has none; the finer feelings he cannot appreciate. In a word, he is foreign—outlandish—a Jew. This is the general picture, whose individual variations are unimportant. The provident hotel-keeper avoids the contact of the Hebrew purse; the little child in school finds no room for the Jew in the game at recess; the man of business, whose relations with an Israelite have been close and honorable, gives vent to a pass-

ing feeling of displeasure in the reproach of "Jew." In social and professional clubs, the "Jew" is blackballed. "Jew" is the text of the opposition political orator. The liberal-minded host tells his guests, with an apologetic air, that the stranger among them "is a Jew, but quite a cultured man." An agreeable companion is spoken of as "a good fellow, if he is a Jew." The merchant who cheats his creditors, the criminal in the prisoners' dock, is a civil offender if he belongs to the Baptist or the Episcopal denomination, but if he comes of Hebrew blood, Judaism is made responsible for fraud and theft. Jew, Jew, Jew is the one all-comprehensive charge.

Let us examine how far the Jew may be answerable for the prejudice which exists against him. It is true that the body of rich Jews in America fails to display the culture that wealth demands. Compared with his Christian neighbor whose equal affluence opens similar advantages, the Jew does not always present a pleasing appearance. Reaching this country when the facilities for accumulation were enormous; with a mercantile aptitude developed by long centuries of enforced confinement to trade, the Hebrew mounted too rapidly to the top of the commercial ladder. Dazzled with the new freedom of America, bewildered by the privileges which the almighty dollar could purchase, the emigrant directed his energies in that road to power and comfort which appeared to him the most available highway. He was not slow to learn the tricks and subterfuges of American trade. While the Jewish mercantile record is as clear proportionally as that of the Christian, the predominance of merchants in the Hebrew community has rendered the business shortcomings of the Jew conspicuous and proverbial. With a pack upon his back, or a few shillings in his pocket, the Hebrew's contact with American culture was exceedingly limited. When the accumulation of wealth introduced him to American manners, he had already become habituated to his particular grooves. It is hard for him to discern the transcendent advantage of any other outlet of energy than the money market. Perhaps, too, the difficulty of entering upon a new course of action deters him from adopting that course, although he may appreciate its value, but he resolves to give his children the benefits he has lacked, and thinks that meanwhile his money can make him independent of popular opinion. He ignores the communal responsibility borne by each Hebrew for his whole race. He does not pause

to reflect, when he violates the laws of etiquette at a hotel or a watering-place, that he is offering the back of every Jew to the lash of prejudice.

In considering the causes of social ostracism for which the Jew is partly or wholly to blame, the racial exclusiveness of the Hebrew is urged as a plea against him. The Israelite is said to avoid Christian society; he does not care to introduce business friends into his domestic circle; at public resorts he herds with members of his own faith. This exclusiveness arises partly from temporary and partly from permanent causes. It is largely due to a morbid habit, born amid the fires of persecution, when the Jew was society's pariah—a habit now cherished by the unspoken fear that the hand of fellowship which the Hebrew is willing and ready to extend may be thrust back contemptuously, or accepted with a mental reservation. Thus far Jewish exclusiveness is temporary; its permanent cause is the rule which forbids marriage with the Gentile. So long as the meeting of the young is attended with special restrictions, so long as the free intercourse customary between men and women in American society is likely to result in unhappiness, the social amalgamation of Jew and Christian must measurably be incomplete. Yet the Jewish marriage restrictions, though often fraught with sorrow to the individual Jew, cannot be disregarded conscientiously by the Hebrew who believes in the mission of his race. The infusion of Aryan blood into Jewish veins would be suicidal for Judaism; it would in a short time remove prejudice by doing away with the object. The Jew who feels himself the apostle of monotheism must bear the yoke of his priesthood. His religious regulations have become the Masonic signs of his fraternity; they are necessary to unite the scattered members of a little band destined to propagate an idea. The Jew still holds himself the personal and responsible heir of that testament, graven in the lightnings of Sinai, and signed with the life-blood of its witnesses.

While the conduct of many conspicuous Jews in America, while the temporary and permanent exclusiveness of the race, tend to cause social banishment, American Christianity is by no means free from blame. The Christian mother sings of Jewish vices in nursery rhyme, and even the catechism of the Sunday-school tends to excite rancor. In it the Jew is pictured as the God-murderer, the scion of a stock accursed and scattered for its sins. A milder preaching gives rise to the patronizing, pitying

spirit of the Christian missionary. A larger liberalism is disposed to reward the Jew for giving to Christianity its founder. Under the circumstances, it is not wonderful that the ardent church-member should bestow some active hatred upon the criminal, or that an involuntary aversion to the Jew should become a mental habit in the most indifferent Christian. To dislike the Hebrew *per se* is natural, whatever the causes of dislike may be. Ordinary minds are not disposed to review a decision which the world has pronounced final, especially when such questioning involves certain drawbacks to the bold thinker. The tendency toward acquiring knowledge of foreign peoples has done very little for the Jew, even where he is not looked upon as an encroaching foreigner, because the prejudices against him are unique. They have been wrought in the very woof of Christianity, and woven in the tissue of occidental civilization. Christianity declines to make room for an interrogation-point, in the case of the Jew. Christianity is too well acquainted with the foreigner always with her, and she refuses further enlightenment.

The popular idea of the Jew finds expression in the works of authors who regard the Jewish question as too paltry a theme for the cogitations of a philosopher. The cultured writer of "Esmond" beheld the type of the Hebraic spirit in the usurer. The mighty thunderer who lies in the dust of Ecclefechan kirk-yard could discover no heroism in the silent suffering of the apostles of an idea. Dickens prejudiced drew an impossible Jew, Fagin; Dickens apologetic produced an equally un-Jewish Riah.

George Eliot, indeed, did bring a clear vision to bear upon the Jewish question. She saw the pathos and the heroism of the Hebrew's mission, and, like the prophets of old, she fired the Jewish heart with memories that the cosmopolitan culture of the times is prone to wash away. But Eliot is before her age, as Shakespeare was before his. Shylock and Mordecai are both Jews. Some of us moderns have discerned the manhood of the betrayed father and the embittered foe, crazed with the passion to avenge racial and personal wrongs. But Mordecai is yet an ideal abstraction; Eliot's insight, a Jewish idiosyncrasy.

What Theophrastus Such calls the "abysmal" ignorance of the Christian world regarding the Jew, is really the main and ever-active fount of prejudice. The notion that a Jew must necessarily speak German, is on a par with that of the English woman who insisted that Americans live on buffalo-meat. There

is something sadly ludicrous in the total misconception of Jewish tenets and practices by persons possessing more than the average intelligence. Periodical literature explains Jewish rites with an elucidation altogether novel to the Hebrew mind. It is not only lack of acquaintance with Jewish doctrine and ceremony, but absolute ignorance of the *personnel* of any other than the emigrant Jew, that foments prejudice. No people, unless under exceptional circumstances, is willing to be judged by its emigration. A Lasker, Jessel, or Oppert is not apt to seek the fortunes of a strange soil. Yet many cultivated Israelites do swell the Jewish exodus. There are thinking men and ambitious men who long for the land where thought is free, and where individual worth and industry have the largest reward. These Hebrews, being foreigners and Jews, are identified by the keen instinct of American society with the ill-bred loungeur of the sea-side porch.

But America is not wholly dependent on the emigrant for a specimen of the Jewish citizen. The large number of cultured American Israelites in this country do not fear condemnation under the most exacting system of etiquette. These Jews recognize the right of every man to choose his own companions, and they are unwilling to seek entrance at doors not opened to them with widest cordiality. It is simply through their lack of pretension that such Hebrews do not materially aid to negative the impression created by their less favored brethren. They are incorporated with the mass of our citizens, distinguished sometimes by a Jewish name or physique, but otherwise divested of foreign characteristics. "What! Are you a Jew?" "You are a different kind of a Jew!" are common remarks. There is always a latent surprise in the Aryan mind that a Jew should be a gentleman.

If the acceptance of the emigrant as the standard of a people be unjust, what plea can be made for the logic which condemns as intrinsically unenlightened a race celebrated for its culture? History, the ancestral roll of nations, tells on its earliest pages the story of Abram the teacher. The father and type of his race, he wandered from place to place the missionary of knowledge. The school-book, not the bayonet, was always the weapon of the Jew. The influence of Jewish learning upon pagan Rome made Christianity possible. In the East, famous colleges of the Jew illumined the region of the Euphrates:

schools of dialecticians concentrated in themselves the learning of the age. In the West, when Moorish culture attained a perfection never surpassed, the Jew rivaled his Semitic brother in every branch of science and literature. While the spirit of the Saxon hovered between the dark of barbarism's starless night and the dim dawn of civilization's day, the Jew basked in the blaze of enlightenment. Semitic philosophy and discovery paved the way for the Reformation. In our own day, the Jew is not backward. Modern literature, music, and statesmanship would be impoverished by the loss of exponents in whose veins the blood of Abram flows. Yet this is the race identified in America with ill breeding—a race unfitted because of its intrinsic vulgarity to enter polite society.

Of the Jewish religion, almost as little is known as of Jewish history. The faith which has supplied modern civilization with the main elements of its moral and its legal codes is reviled as a religion of blood and anger. Its provisions are decried as material, exclusive, its essence as unspiritual. The *credo* of Mosaism is brief. Its confession and articles are limited to an acknowledgment of one incorporeal God. Its teachings are not theological mysteries, but precepts fitted for human life. It offers, indeed, no supersensual reward, but it inculcates charity, it enjoins hatred of lies, avoidance of backbiting, respect toward the deaf and blind. It preceded Christianity in teaching love of our neighbor (Leviticus xix. 18), generosity toward our enemy (Exodus xxiii. 4). Its narrowness may be judged in its regulations for the treatment of the foreigner—regulations whose spirit the highest ethics of our time has hardly reached. "Ye shall not vex the stranger. As one born in the land among you, shall be the stranger that sojourneth among you. Thou shalt love him as thyself." (Leviticus xix. 33, 34.) The material regulations of Judaism are chiefly intended for the agricultural community which the Israelites formed until their captivity. Such rules as apply to trade are founded on the highest equity. "Have not divers weights and measures. A perfect and just weight shalt thou have." (Deuteronomy xxv. 14, 15.)

The sages of Israel instruct their disciples to guard their neighbor's property as their own; to speak little and do much. Of Rabbi Hillel, the elder, who preceded Jesus by several generations, the following anecdote is told. A heathen requested to be taught Judaism while standing on one foot. The teacher

replied, "What is displeasing to thyself, do not unto thy neighbor. This is the law, the rest is commentary."

If neither Jewish blood nor Jewish faith can justify the prejudice against the Jew, it is but fair that another test than that of race and religion be made a law by which social ostracism is decreed. The Hebrew wishes no allowance for his faults. He desires merely to be accepted or rejected as a man. He discovers no virtue in the reasoning which finds Christianity unwilling to typify itself in its Veneerings, yet which sees a just illustration of Judaism in the columns of a comic paper. He insists that an aggregate estimate must necessarily be unfair to the individual, and he points out his double injury in the fact that not only is he judged in the aggregate, but that the aggregate estimate is founded on peculiarities neither general nor inherent. It is a small claim that the Jew makes: he asks merely the first principles of liberty—the acknowledgment of his individuality, and the admission of his personal responsibility. He is willing that society should banish the vulgar man, the uncongenial companion, but he pleads that by the same condemnation society shall not sentence the Jew.

Jewish development in America is yet young—a little younger than the life of America itself. While American institutions are yet in a molten state, the particular genius of the Hebrew has not had time to take upon itself an American form. But there lie in the Jewish blood the mental and moral possibilities which gave rise to prophets and thinkers. It will infuse into the practical life of our new republic the intellectual warmth of the sunlands. The imagination of the Orient shall interpret the rush of Mississippi waters; the music of the Orient shall swell with the voices of Niagara's cataract.

NINA MORAIS.